

# MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

## Communicable Disease Control

# Mumps

(infectious parotitis)

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### What is mumps?

Mumps is an acute viral disease characterized by fever, swelling and tenderness of one or more of the salivary glands. Approximately one or two cases are reported in Montana every 3-4 years.

### Who gets mumps?

Although older people may contract the disease, mumps usually occurs in unimmunized children. Several mumps outbreaks have occurred in colleges and adolescent groups. Mumps is more common during winter and spring.

### How is mumps spread?

Mumps is transmitted by direct contact with saliva and discharges from the nose and throat of infected individuals.

### What are the symptoms of mumps?

Symptoms of mumps include fever, swelling and tenderness of one or more of the salivary glands, usually the parotid gland (located just below the front of the ear). Approximately one third of infected people do not exhibit symptoms.

### How soon after infection do symptoms occur?

The incubation period is usually 16 to 18 days, although it may vary from 14 to 25 days.

### What complications have been associated with mumps?

Swelling of the testicles occurs in 15-25 percent of infected males. Mumps can cause central nervous system disorders such as encephalitis (inflammation of the brain) and meningitis (inflammation of the covering of the brain and spinal column). Other complications include arthritis, kidney involvement, inflammation of the thyroid gland and breasts, and deafness.

### When and for how long is a person able to spread mumps?

Mumps is contagious seven days prior to and nine days after the onset of symptoms. A person is most contagious 48 hours prior to the appearance of symptoms.

### Does past infection with mumps make a person immune?

Yes. Immunity acquired after contracting the disease is usually permanent.

### Is there a vaccine for mumps?

Yes. All persons born after January 1, 1957 should receive two doses of measles mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine. Children should receive the first dose at 12-15 months of age and the second dose before school entry.

### What can be done to prevent the spread of mumps?

The single most effective control measure is maintaining the highest possible level of immunization in the community. Children should not attend school during their infectious period.